

BEST Trustees' Meeting

20th September 2019 – 10:00am – 12:45pm

Room 914, Block 20, SWA

Attendees

Ilona Bond (IB), Paul Walker (PW), Claire Mycock (CM), Alan Lee (AL), David Morgan (DM), Craig Smith (CS), Alison Wilshaw (AW)

Apologies: David Shelvey (DS), Tony Sanderson (TS)

Clerk: Yvonne Humphries (YH)

Approval of Trustee minutes: Previous minutes (18.6.19) approved and signed

Notification of any perceived conflicts of interest: None

Declarations of Interest 2019-20

Trustees completed and submitted to the Clerk their 2019-20 declaration of interest form; DS and TS completed and submitted their declaration of interest forms prior to the meeting.

CS & AW left the meeting whilst nominations took place.

Annual nomination of the Chair and Vice Chair of Trustees

PW's term current term of office is coming to an end. **Decision:** PW agreed to complete another term of office (Sept 2023).

TS made a nomination via the Clerk: IB to remain as Chair and PW to remain as Vice Chair. The proposal was seconded by AL.

Decision: The Trustees voted unanimously to keep IB as the Chair of Trustees; IB accepted the position.

Decision: The Trustees voted unanimously to keep PW as the Vice Chair of Trustees; PW accepted the position.

CS & AW re-joined the meeting.

Previous minutes

YH shared options available in relation to 'Safer recruitment training'. Trustees discussed the fact that IB as the Trust's Safeguarding Lead ensures she attends the necessary training on a bi-annual basis; furthermore, AL, CS and AW have also attended 'Safer recruitment training'. IB advised that should any other Trustee wish to attend the training, it can be accessed for free via the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

BEST Subsidiaries

Three trustees from the BEST Subsidiaries have completed their second term of Office. All three Trustees are happy to renew their terms of office. As per the Articles of Association, the appointment of the subsidiary trustees should be approved by the 'Parent' Board of Trustees.

Decision: The Trustees voted unanimously to renew the terms of office for DS, HH and JS for a period of one year.

Action: Terms of office for the Subsidiary Board of Trustees to be reviewed in September 2020.

DS and CS are currently reviewing the Articles of Association for the subsidiaries; Trustees to notify YH if they have any comments/amendments to be made to the Articles.

Student Outcomes

AL advised that he'd provide an overview on the 2018-19 outcomes for the BEST Schools; AW as the Director of Education will provide information of performance in future but on this occasion observed.

Trustees were provided with three different sources of data to ensure triangulation of evidence: Principal overview (highlights/areas of developments); outcomes against Trustee targets and a comparison of BEST schools outcomes against Local and National data.

During the 2018-19 academic year the school improvement arm of the Trust received additional finance; a Director of Education, a Director of English and a Director of the Teaching School were all appointed. There has been insufficient time for the full impact of the appointments to be seen. Both RBA and ETA had a new Principal.

A discussion followed (see attached papers). Trustees were pleased with performance against both national and local data.

Stakeholder views

AL advised that at each Trustee Meeting there will be an agenda item on 'Stakeholder Views'; the January meeting will be shared services.

The views of the BEST Principals on aligned autonomy within the trust were reviewed and discussed; AL advised that the feedback provided by Principals showed that BEST have the balance about right, with marginal difference between actual versus wanted alignment.

With areas such as compliance and regulation, Principals wish for higher alignment. However, higher autonomy is required for areas such as behavioural management.

Trustees raised caution as data based on the 'medium' could mask diverse Principal views as they'd meet in the middle; it was suggested that the 'range' would give a more transparent oversight.

Action Plan

The 2018/19 action plan was reviewed.

BEST have been approached by a school in Bedfordshire who may be interested in joining the Trust; if they joined it would make BEST a 10 school Trust. Representatives from the BEST Executive Team will be meeting the Principal and LGB in October.

The 2019/20 action plan was reviewed.

To enable greater strategic power, the reserves need to be reviewed; this will be discussed at the next Finance Committee meeting. AL would like each lower school to have a nursery.

Greater alignment of practice is required and will be driven by AW who will ensure that there is a BEST presence and involvement within the Literacy and Maths hubs; the hubs are national/regional centres of excellence.

Shared services will continue to review providers; increase finances and create greater conditions and compliance.

Pix Brook Academy

The Pix Brook temporary build opened successfully on time. 54 pupils arrived and the feedback from both parents and pupils has been positive.

Planning permission for the permanent build has been approved and Wilmot Dixon should commence building works on 26th September 2019 in readiness for completion of phase one in August 2020.

Langford Nursery

Planning permission is pending subject to the Vicar's confirmation that parents can use the church car park.

BEST Governance

During the summer term an external Governance review was conducted across the whole trust; the review measures the quality of impact that governance has on school improvement and outcomes for students. BEST have been accredited with the Governor Mark and are the first multi academy trust to achieve the award.

The BEST Governance Conference is being held on October 5th 2019; Michael Pain, founder and CEO of Forum Strategy, will be a keynote speaker.

Health & Safety

H&S audits were completed by a competent person during the summer term.

High risk addressed by October half term 2019

Medium risk addressed by end of the autumn term 2019

Low risk addressed by spring half term 2020

- Further investigation required into asbestos management.
- The Trust is overseeing responses in relation to staff induction process, accident reporting and stress and wellbeing.
- A Site Agent working group has been set up to encourage cross site working and best practice.
- DM asked that it's considered whether any items identified have an impact on the insurance renewal due Oct'19.
- Reports are with relevant people from schools/trust to consider/action.

Policies for approval

Admission Policy 2021/22

Decision: Trustees unanimously approved the proposed Admission Policy 2021/22 for consultation.

Flexible Working Policy (Previously approved 13.3.19 for union consultation – final sign off)

Decision: Trustees unanimously approved the Flexible Working Policy.

Leave of Absence Policy (Previously approved 15.5.19 for union consultation – final sign off)

Decision: Trustees unanimously approved the Leave of Absence Policy.

Capability Policy (Previously approved 15.5.19 for union consultation – final sign off)

Union request received to remove section 4.7; trustees sought advice from an external HR Consultant.

Decision: Trustees unanimously approved the Capability Policy – Section 4.7 to remain within the policy.

AOB

Teachers Pay awards:

Decision: Trustees unanimously approved the 2.75% pay award with effect from 1st September 2019 – the decision was made via email during the summer break. The level of award was recommended by the Teachers Pay and Conditions 'Pay Review Body' and was supported by the BEST Principals and CFO.

Two Tier:

Trustees and Principals support the decision to become two tier but are concerned about the possible disruption and implications that could be associated with the phased approach. Trustees asked AL to liaise with DfE to ensure the Head Teacher Board are aware to BEST's views ahead of the October meeting in which they consider the changes within the cluster.

Meeting dates:

Request received to move Trustee and Performance Committee meetings from a Wednesday afternoon to a Friday morning or Monday. **Decision:** The Trustees unanimously approved the revised meeting dates for 2019/20:

Trustees' Meeting:

- Wed 22nd Jan → Friday 24th Jan @ 9:30am
- Wed 18th Mar → Friday 20th Mar @ 9:30am
- Wed 13th May → Friday 15th May @ 9:30am
- Wed 24th Jun → Friday 26th June @ 9:30am

Performance Committee meeting

- Wed 6th Nov → Mon 11th November 9:30am-3:30pm
- Wed 26th Feb → Mon 24th Feb @ 9:30am
- Wed 10th Jun → Fri 12th Jun @ 9:30am

Action: YH to amend the outlook invites accordingly.

Next meeting date: Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 4th December @ 10:00am

J Bond
24/1/20

